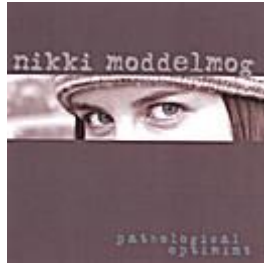


Mp3 Nikki Modelmog - Pathological Optimist



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One reviewer explained her this way: "Nikki Modelmog is a charming and disarming mangle of contradictions. Her songs are filled with semi-cynical innocence and awkward self-assuredness. 10 MP3 Songs FOLK: Folk Pop, FOLK: like Ani Details: From the first note, Nikki Modelmog sounds familiar. The rich voice, the intricate melodies, the unapologetic lyrics bring to mind artists like Michelle Shocked, Lisa Loeb, Patti Griffin, and, clearly, Ani DiFranco. Yet there is something remarkably fresh and daring about Nikki that has been captured on her debut record, "Pathological Optimist." The music is a reflection of the woman. Nikki grew up in the conservative Mennonite farming town of Moundridge, Kansas - but you'd never know it by looking at her. With wild hair in pig tails, glasses that could have been picked out of a 1920s catalog, homemade tie-dye shirt and flowing skirt, a burnt-orange VW Westfalia bus built the same year she was born, Nikki looks every bit the quirky, comfortable old soul friends know her to be. In a time and culture of pretentiousness, Nikki is adorably herself. At 24, after college, marriage, divorce, and a move to Wichita, Nikki picked up the guitar. Six months later, she wrote her first song. I was at a place in my life where I needed to work things out, she remembers. The best place to do it, was in music. I could sing things that I didn't know how to say. Putting what I was feeling into four verses and a chorus helped me work things out and get on with my life. Along the way, Nikki was helped by the monthly singer-songwriters circle at Wichitas legendary Artichoke Sandwich Bar. I'd been writing for less than a year the first time I sat in. I remember listening to a few of the writers thinking I want to be able to write like that. When they started telling how much they liked what I was doing, I started getting serious about my music. It became something I wanted to share. Bryan Masters, songwriter and de facto leader of the circle said, I never know how to describe what Nikki writes. It's all so simultaneously clueless and wise. I think that translates well to people. She has a way of seeing things that the rest of us have been blind to.

That newcomer's look at life may explain why so many of Nikki's songs deliver such a "didn't-see-that-coming" punch. The 10 self-penned songs that make up Pathological Optimist are told from a personal point of view, but they strike a universal nerve. Her simply-stated observations of the overlooked become powerful, disarming epiphanies. Nikki sings of imagined lovers, deafening silence, false starts, and neglected beds. Her characters challenge each other and themselves. They hold on, they let go, and they grow. The one thing they won't do is fit into nice, neat categories. Nikki's disc is an eclectic collection ranging from ballads to bluegrass to pop to tribal rhythms. That's one thing I like about being a solo artist, Nikki said. I don't have to make the song fit a band's sound. I bring in the sounds I want to fit the music. The sounds are diverse, but Nikki and co-producer Mark Scheltgen have created a disc that is coherent and concise, with songs that fit together like book chapters to tell a complete story. In nearly every Nikki song is an acknowledgement of vulnerability. "I'm quick-witted and charming, and a little bit cute / but I'll be the first to admit I don't have a clue / about what it takes, how to challenge the stakes / how to find my just the right you," she sings in Play My Game. And, always, there is belief, hope, and action. For the Pathological Optimist, "I don't live in fear; life's too short to waste away / on the meat and potatoes of a candy-laden bouquet / laced with I wish may, I wish that I might / grasping for something that doesn't hold on so tight." Nikki's music gives voice to the dichotomies of love and the juxtaposition of life's desires and obligations. One reviewer explained her this way: "Nikki Modelmog is a charming and disarming mélange of contradictions. Her songs are filled with semi-cynical innocence and awkward self-assuredness. Nikki's genius comes from an old-soul-meets-Hello-Kitty philosophy of life and storytelling. She ain't no poser. She's genuine. And she's good."

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